

## Article – Sassoli: “To earn trust, unity and transparency are needed”



During the online meeting, Parliament's President said that democracy depends on trust: "Democracy is a system of institutions and laws, which relies on citizens' trust. As politicians, our role is to do whatever it takes to maintain that trust. This is even more true in times of crisis. Europe, like the rest of the world, is in the throes of a pandemic with grave social and economic implications." He added: "Granted, our system and our institutions must be improved. But trust is earned by means of unity and transparency, by adopting a clear and consistent stance."

Sassoli also addressed the ongoing vaccine roll-out: "We need to step up vaccine production; speed up the distribution and administration of vaccines both inside and outside the European Union. But we cannot afford to be naïve. It is time to apply the principles of reciprocity and proportionality before giving the green light to exports from the EU."

Speaking about China's recent sanctions against MEPs and different EU bodies, the President said: "I am concerned about the growing trend towards authoritarianism and the many moves to destabilise democracy. These are developments we must take seriously. Attempts are being made to steer our recovery plan in certain directions, in a clear bid to undermine our independence."

Sassoli also referred to the EU-China investment agreement Parliament will soon be discussing: “As always, Parliament will take great care to ensure that the imperatives of free trade do not outweigh human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

Cooperation with the US following the election of Joe Biden has also created new opportunities for the EU, Sassoli said. “Renewed cooperation between the EU and the new administration in Washington will help lend impetus to our global leadership. We recognise how necessary this is, in the interests of our society.”

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## Ombuds organisations discuss AI and e-government

FRA presented the results of its recent report on AI and fundamental rights, which analysed how fundamental rights are taken into account when using or developing AI applications. Investigators and liaison officials from national ombuds institutions as well as the European Ombudsman participated in the event.

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## The EUIPO wins ‘Public Sector Content Campaign of the Year’ at the European Content Awards

March 25, 2021 [About the EUIPO](#)

The EUIPO wins ‘Public Sector Content Campaign of the Year’ at the European Content Awards

The short movie IPdential is recognised as a great example of an awareness-raising campaign to link IP with the new millennial generation

Can you imagine a world without creativity?’ The award-winning movie IPdential tells us the story of Anna and her quest to find inspiration in a dystopian future where innovation and creativity, the two pillars of intellectual property (IP), seem to have disappeared.

The campaign has been recognised by the European Content Awards as ‘a well-executed branded entertainment film, one that makes the audience forget that

it's advertising at all'. The short movie has also been nominated in over 32 film festivals, and garnered more than 170 000 views in YouTube.

The [European Content Awards](#), which took place online on 18 March 2021, celebrate the work of content marketing agencies, in-house teams and organisations who are creating outstanding marketing campaigns across Europe.

Watch the film

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## Transparency in risk assessment: a new era begins

**New rules on transparency and sustainability are set to transform the way EFSA carries out its role as risk assessor in the EU food safety system.**

A [new regulation passed by the European Parliament and Council of the EU](#), which will apply from 27 March, will bolster the Authority's ability to carry out its risk assessments in accordance with the highest transparency standards.

The regulation will strengthen the reliability and transparency of the scientific studies submitted to EFSA and reinforce the governance of the Authority to ensure its long-term sustainability.

Bernhard Url, EFSA's Executive Director, said: "This is a pivotal moment for the assessment of risks in the food chain in the EU. EFSA is grateful to the European Parliament, to the European Commission and to the EU Member States for giving us this opportunity to bring citizens and stakeholders closer to our work and to benefit from greater scrutiny of our working processes and practices."

Among other initiatives to support implementation of the regulation, EFSA has rolled out new tools and a dedicated web portal to help stakeholders adapt to the new arrangements. The new portal will be live from 30 March.

A series of [training sessions and webinars](#) has also been organised.

The implementation process has been executed [in collaboration with EFSA's stakeholders](#) and partners such as the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) and Member States .

The new arrangements will apply to new mandates and applications and cannot be implemented retroactively. This means that there will be a period of adjustment during which much of EFSA's ongoing work will continue to be carried out under the previous rules and legal provisions.

Mr Url said: “This is a big logistical challenge, and we have committed significant resources to ensuring that the transition to the new system is as smooth and inclusive as possible for our stakeholders.”

### What is the Transparency Regulation?

The regulation was developed in response to a [European Citizens’ Initiative on pesticides](#) and the findings of the [review of the General Food Law Regulation](#) that was completed in January 2018.

Among other things, the new regulation:

- **Allows** citizens access to scientific studies and information submitted to EFSA by industry early in the process of risk assessment.
- **Embeds** public consultations in the process for assessing applications for approval of regulated products.
- **Ensures** that EFSA is notified of all commissioned studies in a particular area to guarantee that companies applying for authorisations submit all relevant information.
- **Gives** the European Commission the option of asking EFSA to procure additional studies.

Further down the line, the regulation will also transform the way EFSA is governed by adding Member State representatives to its Management Board. Work is also under way to make assessment and management of risks in the food chain more accessible to EU citizens by improving communication and engagement tools and practices.

You can find out more on the [European Commission website](#).

[embedded content]

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**[Ukraine: EIB and PRAVEX BANK join forces to enhance access to finance for SMEs affected by the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic](#)**





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- **EIB and PRAVEX BANK have signed a €30 million loan to enhance access to finance for SMEs and mid-caps in Ukraine.**
- **The operation comes under the Team Europe initiative aiming to provide a rapid response to the coronavirus outbreak.**

The European Investment Bank (EIB) and [PRAVEX BANK](#), a member of the Intesa Sanpaolo Group, have signed a €30 million credit line to support Ukrainian private sector businesses, with a focus on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.

SMEs are the backbone of the Ukrainian economy as they account for over 90% of local businesses, contribute more than 50% of GDP, and employ about 60% of the working population. As a consequence of the COVID-19 outbreak, many companies have experienced a decrease in turnover and profitability, leading to payment delays and an increased demand for liquidity. It is now crucial to step up support for private sector businesses, thus helping to protect jobs and keep the economy going.

The operation is a part of Team Europe's overall response to the COVID-19 crisis aiming to support a sustainable social and economic recovery in the region.

**Head of the EIB Resident Representation for Ukraine Jean-Erik de Zagon** said: *"Small and medium-sized enterprises are vital for the Ukrainian economy and have been hit particularly hard by the COVID-19 crisis. It is one of the EIB's top priorities to support the resilience of the private sector during this unprecedented crisis with the provision of funding through our cooperation with PRAVEX BANK. The operation aims to make available vital financing for SMEs and mid-caps to help them cope with the economic impact of*

*the COVID-19 pandemic – not only to keep businesses afloat, but also to strengthen their resilience and safeguard jobs.”*

**Head of Cooperation of the EU Delegation to Ukraine Frederik Coene** said:  
*“More than ever during these challenging times, businesses need access to affordable credit from banks. The EIB plays an important role in the support of the private sector as part of the European Union’s overall Team Europe relief effort. This assistance comes at a time when SMEs need strong support to overcome the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic.”*

**Chairman of the Management Board of PRAVEX BANK Gianluca Corrias** said:  
*“Cooperation with the EIB constitutes an important step in helping our bank reach its strategic goal to expand financing of small and medium enterprises, as well as mid-caps. This credit line will help us support our clients from the real economy, providing them with the affordable loans they need in order to mitigate the economic consequences of the pandemic crisis they have faced.”*

### **Team Europe adds value for Ukrainian companies**

The EIB investment is an integral part of Team Europe’s overall response to COVID-19 and supports the sustainable social and economic recovery of the EU’s Eastern Neighbourhood. The operation reinforces both SMEs and mid-caps, which are the backbone of national economies and a major source of employment.

### **Background information:**

#### **About the EIB in Ukraine:**

[The EIB has worked with Ukraine](#) since 2007. The EU bank is committed to supporting Ukraine and helping to create the conditions necessary for the achievement of economic stability. Ukraine has been the main recipient country of EIB support in the Eastern Neighbourhood, accounting for more than 60% of EIB lending activity in this region. As one of the key International Financing Institutions (IFIs) in Ukraine, the European Investment Bank focuses on social and economic infrastructure, transport and connectivity, local private sector development, energy efficiency, climate action, and innovation. The Bank supports the private sector primarily through financial intermediation, and also by providing direct loans to selected large companies. Notably, the EIB has been the first IFI to make available long-term funding in local currency to a local bank in support of Ukrainian SMEs.

**PPRAVEX BANK**, part of Intesa Sanpaolo Group since 2008, has been in the market of Ukraine since 1992 serving Ukrainian customers for over 25 years. The Bank has a national coverage and provides the entire range of banking services to Retail, Corporate and Institutional clients. Using the best practices and international presence of Intesa Sanpaolo Group, PRAVEX BANK offers innovative solutions for corporate clients regarding working capital and investment financing, deposits, international payments and fund transfers, and special conditions on trade finance. Among PRAVEX BANK’s main retail products are mortgages, the European Personal Loan and the Famiglia

Service Package.

[Intesa Sanpaolo Group](#) is the leading bank in Italy and one of the soundest and the most profitable banks in Europe. It offers commercial, corporate investment banking, asset management and insurance services. Intesa Sanpaolo Group has approximately 14.7 million clients in Italy who are serviced through both digital and traditional channels. The Group's international subsidiary banks serve 7.1 million customers across Eastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. Intesa Sanpaolo's IMI Corporate and Investment Banking Division operates worldwide, with numerous branches coordinated by five Hubs in London, New York, Hong Kong, Dubai and Milan. Intesa Sanpaolo is considered one of the most sustainable banks in the world. For the Group, creating value means being a driver for growth, for the benefit of both society and the economy. With environmental concerns in mind, the Group has set up a 6 billion euro fund for the circular economy. Intesa Sanpaolo supports major economic inclusion and poverty reduction projects, including an impact fund of 1.2 billion euro for loans available to social groups who struggle to access credit. Intesa Sanpaolo has a high level of involvement in cultural initiatives, organized by the Bank or in collaboration with other entities in Italy and further afield. These include permanent and temporary exhibitions showcasing the Bank's impressive artistic heritage at the Gallerie d'Italia, the Group's museums located in Milan, Naples, Vicenza and soon Turin.